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SANTA'S GOT A NEW SLEIGH AND IT'S PACKING TREATS

Staff at Wheaton GMC Buick Cadillac on Monday show off the Christmas goodies that they've been working throughout November to collect and pack into the box of a 2014 GMC Sierra 1500 for the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre. With contributions of toys and food, the employees are doing the Christmas gift drive for a third straight year. The food bank plans to pick up the pickup-sized donation later this week. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Photo-radar plan a ploy for cash: Taxpayers group

Proposed expansion. CTF says after-the-fact penalties fail to tackle dangerous driving

The Saskatchewan government's planned photo-radar project in school zones and "high-risk" areas is strictly an expanding ploy to pad provincial coffers rather than an effort to tackle dangerous driving, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation alleges.

"It's a sad day for Saskatchewan taxpayers, because a photo-radar program is never, ever about safety. It's always about money," Colin Craig, prairie director of the CTF, told Metro on Monday of the plan, which was announced recently as part of amendments to the Traffic Safety Act.

"It's not about protecting kids in school zones — that's the guise to squeeze more money out of taxpayers' pockets."

Craig says that rather than pursuing photo-radar, which issues tickets and fines after the fact, authorities should station police officers at school zones and other high-risk areas to immediately take dangerous drivers off the streets.

The Saskatchewan Party government, however, has repeatedly denied allegations of turning to the photograph radar system to bolster revenue, arguing that its implementation offers a strong deterrent for speeders.

Karen Hill, a spokeswoman for the party, said the use of the privately contracted system — including the two-year pilot project for high-risk areas and school zones, as recommended by the province's new Traffic Safety Committee — "remains about improving safety on the roads," and nothing else.

"This is not a significant expansion of the photo-radar program, but targeting those areas where safety is paramount," Hill told Metro by email of the plan for the additional camera use, after the program was launched this past summer in highway construction zones.

"The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to state that if we see no revenue from these cameras, we would be very happy. It would mean that drivers are obeying the law and keeping our roads safe."

The Opposition NDP, on the other hand, is taking a wait-and-see approach to photo-radar until the pilot project concludes.

"If it works for Saskatchewan in reducing fatalities and injuries, and if it gets drivers to be aware of dangerous speeding ... we'll support it," said Doyle Vermette, New Democrat MLA for Cumberland.

MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO IN REGINA

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Sask. garages get buried in thick blanket of snow tires

Backlog. Co-owner says people are growing to appreciate the need for winter maintenance

MORGAN MODJESKI
morgan.modjeski@metronews.ca

As the full force of winter hits Saskatchewan gets, garages across the province are dealing with a backlog of customers trying to prepare their wheels.

Kelly McEwen, co-owner of Avalon Auto Service in Saskatoon, said on Monday that there's always an increase in customers seeking maintenance in the cold season, though they've seen a jump of about 15 to 20 per cent each year.

"People have become more aware of the need for it," McEwen said.

"We're booking about a week and a half away.... Every year, it seems to get busier."

The vast majority of customers are coming for winter tires. The increase has been from up to 800 cars a month to between 800 and 1,000.

Jack Dubois, general manager and owner of OK Tire & Auto Service in Regina, said the main push for winter tires has slowed, but they're expecting a resurgence as the province gets more snow this week.

"The minute we get a stop in snow on the ground and people are getting around OK, they seem to forget that winter is still coming," Dubois said.

CAA Saskatchewan endorses the snow-ready rubber.

"Rubber in the all-season tires starts to loose elasticity and harden at around 7 C," said Christine Niemczyk, director of corporate communications and public relations, "and that significantly reduces a tire's ability to grip the road."

Snow end to it

"It's quite a substantial increase. It's very hard on staff; it's hectic."

Jack Dubois, general manager and owner of OK Tire & Auto Service in Regina

Kelly McEwen, co-owner of Avalon Auto Service in Saskatoon, stands with a pile of winter and summer tires at his garage on Broadway Avenue. He's seen a 15 to 20 per cent annual increase in customers looking for winter tires. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO IN SASKATOON

Electronic upgrade

RCMP speeding up speeding tickets

The time RCMP spend on Saskatchewan traffic stops will be cut by more than half through the launch of an electronic ticketing system, officials say.

Instead of manually putting traffic-offence information into their system, officers can scan licences to see motorists' driving records. They can also digitally record fines and print tickets on the spot.

The cost of the upgrade is about $250,000, said Justice Minister Gordon Wyant.

The RCMP's full fleet in Saskatchewan is slated to be outfitted with the gear by the spring. Municipal police in the province will have access to it after that. SARAH TAGUIAM/METRO IN REGINA

Justice Minister Gordon Wyant, left, is shown the e-ticketing technology on Monday. SARAH TAGUIAM/METRO

Quality of care

NDP says province needs bill of rights for long-term care

The Opposition says Saskatchewan should follow the recommendations of a law-reform commission and bring in a residents' bill of rights for long-term care homes.

NDP Leader Cam Broten says the bill of rights would be something that families could point to when a facility's care is falling short.

The Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan made the suggestion in a report in May.

Health Minister Dustin Duncan says the province could consider looking at a bill of rights, but says many of the changes could be made without such a document. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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TYLENOL NIGHTTIME

N.Y. derailment. Train was travelling 52 m.p.h. over the speed limit

A commuter train that derailed over the weekend, killing four passengers, was hurtling at 82 m.p.h. as it entered a 30 m.p.h. curve, a federal investigator said Monday. But whether the wreck was the result of human error or brake trouble was still unclear, he said.

Asked why the train was going so fast, National Transportation Safety Board member Earl Weener said, "That's the question we need to answer."

Weener said the information on the locomotive's speed was preliminary and extracted from the Metro-North train's two data recorders, taken from the wreckage after the Sunday morning accident in the Bronx.

He also said investigators had begun interviewing the crew members, but he would not disclose what the engineer had told them.

He said investigators were also examining the engineer's cellphone — apparently to determine whether he was operating the train while distracted.

Asked whether the tragedy because of human error or bad brakes, Weener said, "The answer is, at this point in time, we can't tell." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ottawa

New regulations ahead for prepaid credit cards

Ottawa is moving ahead with new regulations on so-called prepaid credit cards, but not in time for the holiday shopping season.

A source says the federal government will bring in an array of regulations governing prepaid cards, including an end to expiry dates and a prohibition on charging maintenance fees for the first year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Netanyahu under fire for high-rolling ways

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu looks up as he arrives for a private audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican on Monday.

RICCARDO DE LUCA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

It's all about the Benjamins. Israeli PM raised taxes, slashed services while spending thousands on candles and flowers

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's penchant for scented candles is setting off a stink, with media and politicians accusing him Monday of extravagantly spending public money.

According to a document obtained by a civil liberties group, in 2012, Netanyahu spent $1,700 on scented candles, $23,300 on flower arrangements and $31,600 on gardening at his official residence in Jerusalem, among other costs totalling about $909,000.

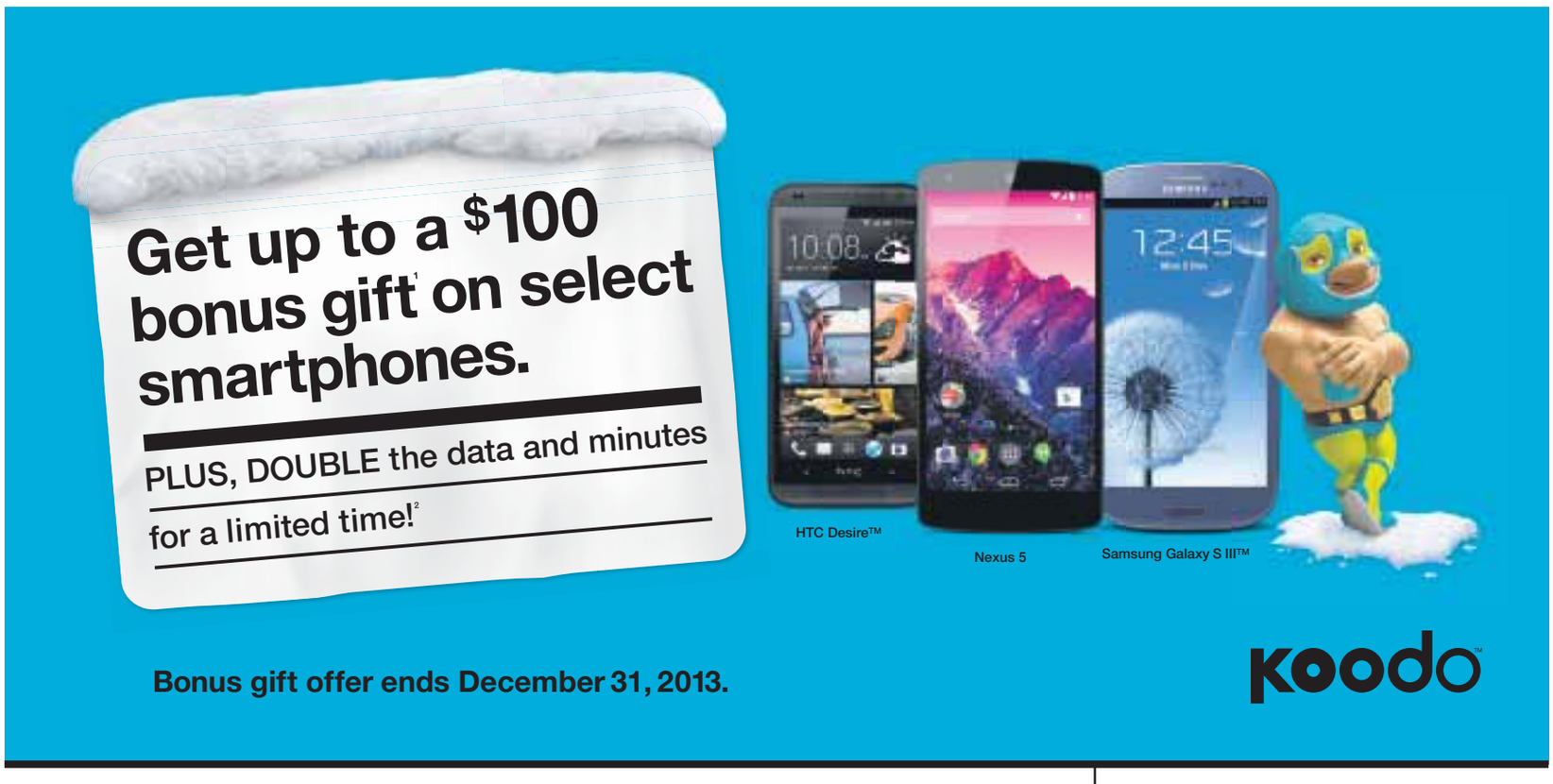
The report threatens to embarrass Netanyahu, whose government raised taxes and slashed services earlier this year to decrease a budget deficit.

"When the prime minister presents such inflated and absurd amounts in the expense sheet to the nation, he can't look at his citizens in the eye and swear that there must be cuts to their welfare, health care, security and education," wrote Arye Aplatoni in the Maariv daily.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

More details

- Netanyahu was also shown to spend $11,800 on laundry and $41,600 on catering at his residence.
- The water bill for his vacation home amounted to more than $22,000, and the electrical bill hit $7,390.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Rafferty seeks public money to fund appeal

Victoria Stafford murder. Michael Rafferty can't afford legal help but needs it to appeal complex case, his lawyer argues

Michael Rafferty, left, wants the Appeal Court to order that the public fund his appeal of his convictions in the death of eight-year-old Victoria Stafford, right. LEFT: DAVE CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE; RIGHT: CONTRIBUTED

The jury that convicted Michael Rafferty of killing eight-year-old Victoria Stafford should have considered that he might have been only an accessory after the fact to her brutal murder, Ontario's Appeal Court was told Monday.

The argument was part of lawyer Paul Calarco's attempt to convince the court that there is merit to an appeal of Rafferty's convictions for first-degree murder, sexual assault causing bodily harm and kidnapping.

Rafferty wants the Appeal Court to order that the public fund his appeal, which Calarco argues is too complex for Rafferty to handle by himself. Rafferty can't afford to hire a lawyer and has been turned down four times by Legal Aid since his convictions in May 2012.

Rafferty's trial heard that he and his former girlfriend, Terri-Lynne McClintic, lured Victoria from her school in Woodstock, Ont., and drove to a secluded field, where the Grade 3 student was sexually assaulted and brutally beaten to death in April 2009.

It's "absolutely vital" that every person have the right to a fair trial and a proper appeal, Calarco said.

"That applies no matter if the person is one for whom the public has sympathy... or a person the public has no sympathy for," he said.

Appeal Court Justice Marc Rosenberg reserved his decision, but he can either dismiss Rafferty's motion, request that Legal Aid fund a lawyer or order that the money should come from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Rafferty had been serving his life sentence at Kingston Penitentiary, but after the prison closed this year, he was moved to an institution in Quebec. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Grounds for appeal?

The trial judge made three errors, lawyer Paul Calarco told the court.

- McClintic made conflicting statements about whether she or Rafferty delivered the fatal blows to Tori. If she was the "principal offender," then Rafferty's actions would make him an accessory after the fact.
- Superior Court Judge Thomas Heeney erred by not giving the jury a Vetrovec warning, which cautions juries about the testimony of untrustworthy witnesses.
- The third ground that Calarco said points to the merit of Rafferty's appeal is another issue regarding McClintic's conflicting evidence. "This is a person who is totally capable of deceit," Calarco said.
- Crown attorney Randy Schwartz opposed the motion, arguing that the appeal is not particularly complex and doesn't raise novel points of law.

Student suicide video seen online

An Ontario university has confirmed a fire was deliberately set in one of its dorms and is urging the public to avoid a suicide video of the event posted online.

It is believed a man who attempted suicide by taking pills and lighting his dorm room on fire — and streamed video of the event online — is a 20-year-old student at the University of Guelph.

On Saturday evening, a man identified only as "Stephen" posted a message on 4chan's /b/ board, one of the Internet's most diverse communities.

"Tonight I will be ending my own life. I've been spending the last hour making the preparations and I'm ready to go through with it. As an oldfag who's been on 4chan since 2004, I thought I would finally give back to the community in the best way possible: I am willing to an hero on cam for you all. All that I request is for you guys to link me to a site where I am able to stream it for you guys, then I will gladly fulfill my promise," wrote Stephen.

School response

"The university ... is urging people not to watch or distribute this hurtful material."
University of Guelph statement

In 4chan parlance, "an hero" is slang for committing suicide.

A video stream was set up and users watched as Stephen swallowed some unidentified pills and chased them with vodka. He then proceeded to start a fire in his room and curl up in bed.

Stephen continued to post to the stream's live chat, typing messages like "#imdead" and "#omgimonfire."

Eventually, firefighters stormed in and rescued the young man.

Although initial reports attempted to link the incident to a house fire in Pittsburgh, it now appears that Stephen is a student at the University of Guelph. Firefighters were on campus Saturday night and took one victim to hospital with serious burns.

The fire call came in approximately 90 minutes after Stephen's first post on 4chan.

The university has since confirmed that the fire was deliberately set by a 20-year-old student in Dundas Hall.

"The university is aware that there is disturbing social media activity circulating about this incident and is urging people not to watch or distribute this hurtful material," read a statement from the school.

According to the Daily Dot, 4chan users are already celebrating Stephen, referring to him as "Toaster Steve." LUKE SIMCOE/METRO ONLINE

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MLA in hot water over photo with blackface Christmas character

Halifax. MLA says he now realizes traditional character 'Black Pete' may be inappropriate

HALEY RYAN
Metro in Halifax

Liberal MLA Joachim Stroink gets emotional as he takes questions from the media at the Liberal office Monday after receiving criticism for a photo, seen at right, that he posted on Twitter. JEFF HARPER/METRO IN HALIFAX

The Liberal MLA for Halifax-Chebucto fought back tears Monday as he spoke with media about a photo of himself sitting on the lap of a blackface Christmas character he had posted to Twitter and later removed due to the backlash.

Joachim Stroink tweeted the image of himself at a Dutch Christmas event with Zwarte Piet, or "Black Pete," on Sunday evening

"This is a Dutch tradition I grew up with and never, ever in my deepest heart, ever thought that this would be portrayed in this manner," Stroink said. "There was no malicious intent whatsoever."

The debate around Pete intensified this year after cultural experts with the United Nations began examining whether the tradition is racist. People in the Netherlands are also divided, with some protesting the character and others declaring Zwarte Piet a symbol of Christmas fun.

Stroink said the negative attention he was getting on Monday "hurts in many ways," because he's had to realize parts of his own culture might be at odds with the African Nova Scotian citizens he represents as a politician.

Stroink said he realizes there is "no place" for blackface in Nova Scotia culture and it could be that Zwarte Piet is no longer appropriate. Stroink met with Tony Ince, a black member of the legislature and the minister of African Nova Scotian affairs, to discuss updating the tradition.

Questioning tradition

'Black Pete' sparks debate

The Dutch character is the servant of St. Nicholas or "Sinterklaas" according to a traditional song, and is often shown wearing blackface makeup, red lipstick and a frizzy "Afro" wig.

Christopher Helland, a sociology of religion professor at Dalhousie University, said the photo may not have been such an issue without social media, but added online debates are good because they allow people who aren't usually heard to express their concerns.

Brazeau lands new gig as Parliament Hill reporter

Suspended senator Patrick Brazeau has found work as a freelance reporter for the Halifax edition of Frank Magazine, despite having no prior journalism experience.

Brazeau openly solicited work on Twitter after he and fellow senators Mike Duffy and Pamela Wallin were suspended in early November over their questionable expense claims.

The satire and gossip magazine announced its newest hire Monday.

Brazeau dropped off his application for accreditation to the parliamentary press gallery in person Monday afternoon.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Patrick Brazeau applies for membership to the parliamentary press gallery at the National Press Building in Ottawa on Monday. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Manitoba

Opposition leader wishes 'infidel atheists' a happy holiday

A video by a citizen journalist of Manitoba's Opposition leader Brian Pallister has left online commentators divided as to whether his comments are insulting or an awkward attempt at humour.

In the recording, Pallister offers seasonal greetings to Christians, Jews and others: "All you infidel atheists out there, I want to wish you the very best also," the Progressive Conservative leader says.

"I don't know what you celebrate during the holiday season. I myself celebrate the birth of Christ, but it's your choice, and I respect your choice. If you wish to celebrate nothing and just get together with friends, that's good, too."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Here come the Amazon drones!

This is not a joke. By 2018 the world's largest online retailer aims to deliver your order to your door via a drone

Amazon.com is working on a way to get packages to customers in 30 minutes or less — via self-guided drone.

Consider it the modern version of a pizza delivery boy, minus the boy.

Amazon.com said it's working on the so-called Prime Air unmanned aircraft project in its research and development labs. But the company says it will take years to advance the technology and for the Federal Aviation Administration to create the necessary rules and regulations.

The project was first reported by CBS' 60 Minutes Sunday night, hours before millions of shoppers turned to their computers for Cyber Monday sales. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos said in a prime-time interview that while the octocopters look like something out of science fiction, there's no reason they can't be used as delivery vehicles. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The specs

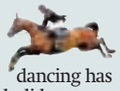
Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos discussed the details of the drones in an interview.

- The drones can carry packages that weigh up to five pounds, which covers about 86 per cent of the items Amazon delivers.
- Amazon is testing the drones to have a range of about 17 kilometres, which could cover a significant portion of the population in urban areas.

This undated image provided by Amazon.com shows the Prime Air unmanned aircraft project that the online retailer is working on. AMAZON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

My true love maxed out

On the 13th day of Christmas came the $114,651 Visa bill



The price of lords-a-leaping and ladies dancing has spiked this holiday season, but other items mentioned in the carol The Twelve Days of Christmas still cost the same as they did last year.

Buying one set of the gifts mentioned in each verse costs $27,393 US in stores, or 7.7 per cent more than last year, according to the so-called Christmas Price Index that PNC Wealth Management updates annually. If you buy all 364 items repeated throughout the carol, you'll pay $114,651 US — 6.9 per cent more than last year.

"We were surprised to see such a large increase from a year ago, given the overall benign inflation rate in the U.S.," said Jim Dunigan, managing executive of investments for PNC.

The federal government's core Consumer Price Index rose only 1.7 per cent this year. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 93.98¢ (-0.18¢)

TSX 13,419.57 (+24.17)

OIL $93.82 US (+$1.10)

GOLD $1,221.90 US (-$28.50)

Natural gas: $3.97 US (+6¢)
Dow Jones: 16,008.77 (-77.64)

It's my party and I'll ask for a UNESCO world heritage designation if I want to

German beer brewers are seeking a 500th birthday present for their famed purity law: An official seal of approval as world heritage. The German Brewers' Federation said Monday it has applied to German officials and UNESCO, the United Nations' cultural agency, to have the purity law — the "Reinheitsgebot" — recognized by the UN as a piece of the world's "intangible heritage." The purity law dates back to 1516 and allows nothing but water, barley malt, hops and yeast for brewing. Germany boasts some 1,300 breweries and 5,000 brands of beer. MATTHIAS SCHRADER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Calling for $15 US per hour. Can I get a living wage with that fast-food job?

Fast-food workers in about 100 U.S. cities will walk off the job this Thursday, protest organizers say, which would mark the largest effort yet in a push for higher pay.

The actions would build on a campaign that began about a year ago to call attention to the difficulties of living on the American federal minimum wage of $7.25 US an hour.

Protesters are calling for pay of $15 US an hour, although many see the figure as a rallying point rather than a near-term possibility.

It's not clear what the actual turnout will be, or whether the walkouts will be enough to disrupt restaurant operations. Similar actions this summer had varying results, with some restaurants briefly unable to serve customers and others seemingly unaffected. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In August protests were held outside a McDonald's, with more demonstrations set for Thursday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

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BLACK FRIDAY LEAVES A BLACK MARK

SHE SAYS

Jessica Napier
metronews.ca

For five days straight my email inbox has received an uninterrupted deluge of sale announcements and promotional messages touting can't-miss markdowns on everything from leather jackets to hotel rooms to sushi platters.

From Black Friday Eve (previously known as American Thanksgiving) through to Cyber Monday, my cellphone has served as an annoying reminder of our collective obsession with discounted consumer goods and my own inability to remove myself from email lists.

You'd think Canadians would have been spared from this fabricated "holiday." But even though our Thanksgiving came and went over a month ago, Canadian retailers just had to get their own slice of that profitable retail pie. Wait — I should probably avoid "pie" references as they might conjure up images of families spending time together, when in fact 'tis the season for saving 40 per cent off flat-screen TVs.

I get it, stuff is expensive, and when that same stuff becomes not so expensive for a limited time, it's tempting to try and cash in on those savings. But the whole Black Friday thing has gotten out of control.

How does a simple holiday sale transform an average group of people into a stampeding herd who will stop at nothing to validate their self-worth through the accumulation of designer clothing and brand-name electronics?

In 2008, a 34-year-old Walmart employee died in Long Island after being trampled to death by hordes of impatient shoppers waiting to enter the store.

One of the worst things about this heinous event is that the bargain hunters — upon hearing the news of the man's death — just kept shopping. The same thing happened again in 2011 when shoppers walked over a 61-year-old man's collapsed body at a Target store in West Virginia.

According to blackfridaydeathcount.com — a morbid website that tallies the number of deaths and injuries related to Black Friday shopping events — there have been seven deaths and 90 injuries recorded since 2006. It's sickening to think that we've come to accept tragedies as just another part of this annual ritualistic display of mass consumption.

Blackfridaydeathcount.com

There have been seven deaths and 90 injuries recorded since 2006.

Why do we continue to support a tradition that puts a price on a human life, especially when that dollar amount is a mere $35 off a Blu-ray player?

Sorry to get a bit sentimental, but what I really want for Christmas this year doesn't have a price tag on it. I want us all to start acting less greedy and much more humane. I want to live in a world where, if people see a man fall, they help him get back up rather than brutally crushing him to death as they lunge at 2-for-1 Lego box sets.

Watching clips of savage shoppers mauling one another in the electronics aisle, I find myself wishing that this time of year could look more like the feel-good opening montage from Love Actually rather than a climactic scene from The Hunger Games.

Follow Jessica Napier on Twitter @MetroSheSays

ZOOM

Satan Claus is coming to town

SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES

Empty stockings should be the least of your fears

Revellers in Austria wear demon outfits while girls dress as angels prior to the annual Krampus night. The event honours Krampus — who, according to folklore, is the demon-like companion of St. Nicholas — who whips bad children with birch branches. METRO

Devil-may-scare

Krampus is represented by a hand-carved wooden mask with animal horns, a suit made from sheep or goat skin and large cow bells attached to the waist. In recent years, Tyrol has seen the founding of village Krampus associations with up to 100 members each who parade without St. Nicholas at Krampus events in November and early December.
METRO

Krampus's pagan roots

- The European practice of donning beast-like costumes and performing folk plays can be traced back thousands of years to pagan times. Among the most common figures in these rituals were Old Man Winter and the horned Goat-Man — archetypes now found in the forms of St. Nicholas/Santa Claus, and the devil, a.k.a. Krampus.
- Since the 1800s, Krampus has been emblazoned on festive greeting cards, often with the message "Grüß Vom Krampus" ("Greetings from Krampus"). In this way, the Krampus acquired a campy, Santa-ized quality. In 2004, comics publisher Monte Beauchamp reintroduced Krampus cards to America nearly a century after their heyday.

Clickbait

ANDREW FIFIELD
andrew.fifield@metronews.ca

Whether it's the holidays or vacations that have you squeezed for cash, December can be the perfect month to stay inside. Here's three games that should serve you well:

Lords of Waterdeep:
Build a network of agents and recruit adventurers to climb the ladder of power in Waterdeep, all while racing against your rival lords. Developed by Playdek, the simple mechanics and smooth multiplayer make it just the latest in an embarrassment of board game riches available on the App Store. A note to new players: The AI is merciless. Play through the tutorial and take your game to some human competition. (iOS/$6.99)

Plague Inc:
Richly supported with updates since its 2012 release, the developers of this death-to-humanity strategy sim have just dropped a new scenario. Choose the country where you would like your pet pathogen to infect its first victims, then hone its lethal skills and hopefully watch it spread to take its place among history's most effective plagues. (iOS, Android/$0.99)

Mikey Shorts:
If you're looking for a time-waster that's a little less , the price has dropped on the excellent Mikey Shorts from $0.99 to a crowd-pleasing zero cents. It's a simple sidescrolling runner that owes more than a little debt to Super Mario Bros. and just as addictive. (iOS/Free)

SCREENGRAB

Letters

Where's the Black Friday reporting?
I noticed while reading the Metro that there was zero reporting about the ridiculous behavior of people during Black Friday shopping. I was hoping considering last week's papers were bursting with flyers, full and extended pages of ads, that you would report **anything** about the injuries or deaths caused by selfish shoppers. Instead, nothing. I guess it's easier to take money for Black Friday advertising than give an opinion on the reprehensible human behavior that comes with it.
Brian George Bowes, Toronto

Twitter

Suspended Senator Patrick Brazeau gets a gig with political satire mag Frank. What other kinds of work should he take on?

@FrenchmanCanada: He tried boxing and that didn't work really well. He should try wrestling, his twitter handle would make a great name: @TheBrazman

@KevinCHamilton: I think a career in satire really is the best thing for such an absurd person. Easier to explain away the crazy things he says.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: saskatoonletters@metronews.ca

metro
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DVD review

The Hangover Trilogy

Director. Todd Phillips

Stars. Zach Galifianakis, Bradley Cooper, Ed Helms

●●●○○

Any definition of the law of diminishing returns should in future simply have an arrow pointing to the cover of this triple set. The Hangover arrived in 2009 as a hilarious original comedy/mystery directed by Todd Phillips and starring Bradley Cooper, Zach Galifianakis, Ed Helms and Justin Bartha. The high-concept story had the four actors as bachelor party attendees on a Vegas bender. Three of them awaken from a night of drunken frolics to discover the fourth guy, the groom, MIA and possibly in danger. Wacky clues and bizarre antics enliven their search, which did boffo box office biz. A sequel was a given, but few could have predicting the rinse-and-repeat rip that was The Hangover Part II in 2011, which essentially replayed the story in a more exotic locale, Bangkok. Expectations were low for The Hangover Part III this past summer, and those expectations were met. Phillips thankfully ditched the drunk-and-hunt plot, replacing it with a crime angle (John Goodman plays an angry gangster). But he also dumped most of the laughs. The first film remains good enough to almost forgive the two weak sequels.

PETER HOWELL

Climb every mountain

The Sound of Music Live! Time is ticking for the cast of NBC's live production — a feat not attempted in more than 50 years

Carrie Underwood stars in The Sound of Music Live! on Thursday.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Maria, former would-be nun, is about to get married.

Starring as Maria in NBC's new version of The Sound of Music, Carrie Underwood is clad in her own T-shirt and leggings plus a wedding veil as she reverently steps through the bare-bones Manhattan rehearsal space while three dozen castmates, on their feet as if in church, sing How do you solve a problem like Maria?

Underwood's procession ends at the "altar" (marked by a music stand) to join her groom, Capt. von Trapp, played by jeans-and-sweater-sporting Stephen Moyer.

During this preliminary run-through a few weeks ago, much work clearly remained to get The Sound of Music Live! ready for airtime on Thursday, when it, along with everyone involved, will make history: More than a half-century has passed since a broadcast network has dared to mount a full-scale musical for live TV.

It would have been risky enough revisiting this Rodgers and Hammerstein classic on any terms. But this is no remake of the not-to-be-tampered-with Julie Andrews juggernaut, declares Neil Meron. Meron and longtime partner Craig Zadan are the telecast's Oscar-winning executive producers.

Instead, The Sound of Music Live! is the 1959 Broadway musical reimagined for TV, then given extra crackle with a live presentation.

Meron's message: Everybody knows The Sound of Music, or thinks they do from the 1965 film nearly everyone has seen. But relatively few fans are acquainted with the stage original. Drawing from it, The Sound of Music Live! is meant to feel familiar, yet at the same time come across as new and different.

Consider: Moyer with castmates Laura Benanti (as Baroness Elsa Schrader) and Christian Borle (as Max Detweiler) are rehearsing a couple of weeks later a saucy song titled How Can Love Survive? This song will be brand-new to most viewers of the telecast — it was dropped from the movie.

"Plenty of nothing you haven't got. How can love survive?" Max tunefully teases the wealthy Elsa, who, in her posh relationship with her fiance, Capt. von Trapp, can never count theirs among "all the famous love affairs (where) lovers starve and snuggle."

This number, sung to an instrumental track recorded by a 40-piece orchestra, takes place on the sumptuous von Trapp terrace, complete with a fountain and a panoramic view of the Alps.

There are still no costumes — at the moment, Borle is wearing jeans and a Batman T-shirt — but by now the entire production has redeployed to a cavernous Long Island, N.Y., soundstage.

Grumman Studios' Stage 3, with square footage rivaling a football field's, is now home to the terrace, along with five neighbouring sets evoking pre-Second World War Austria including the abbey, a festival site draped with huge swastikas and the summit over which (spoiler alert) Maria, the Captain and his seven children pass to flee the Nazis at the musical's conclusion.

This will mark Carrie Underwood's first time in a major acting role. Despite her status as a multiplatinum country music superstar who rose to fame as the winner of American Idol in 2005, she is a rookie compared to the other stage veterans.

"Carrie is one of the bravest artists we've ever worked with," says Meron, who notes that she arrived two weeks before the production's six-week rehearsal began with her lines fully memorized, to get a head start.

"Every day," she says during a break, "I feel like I discover new things and how to go places in acting that I didn't think I could go."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Where to watch it

- **Citytv.** The Sound of Music Live! airs on Thursday at 8 p.m. EST.
- **NBC.** Also begins the live show at 8 p.m. EST

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Kate Moss ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Who gets to canoodle with Kate at her fantasy fete?

Everything's coming up Kate Moss this week.

First up, the supermodel, who turns 40 next month, was honoured at the British Fashion Awards in London on Monday where she won a special award for her 25 years in the fashion world.

Secondly, her hotly-anticipated issue of Playboy, which also celebrates the magazine's 60th anniversary, hits stands in the U.S. on Friday. The 18-page spread features a Q & A with Moss and Tom Jones. Jones just lobs softballs at the model (as you should when someone is naked) with such questions as, "Who would be on your ultimate guest list?" The model replies, "Jack Nicholson, [photographer] David Bailey, Stevie Nicks, Catherine Deneuve, Joan Collins — love! She texted me the other day. I could not believe it. 'Hi, it's Joan Collins.' I was like.… [mimes dying-of-shock], My husband, because it would be mean if I didn't invite him. And Hugh Hefner, obviously."

Paul Walker

Investigation into Walker's death unearthing unsettling details: TMZ

Details continue to emerge about the car wreck that killed Fast and Furious actor Paul Walker and his business partner, Roger Rodas, on Saturday. TMZ.com reports that cops are looking into the possibility that Walker and Rodas were drag racing when their Porsche exploded after first hitting a tree and then a lamppost. The area where they died is a well-known racing strip. In fact, the site reports that fans are "doing dangerous burn-outs, donuts and other high speed stunts" at the death site in memoriam of Walker. Meanwhile, production for Fast and Furious 7 "won't be scrapped," sources close to the production tell The Hollywood Reporter. The production has been underway in Atlanta, taking a break for the Thanksgiving holiday, and was scheduled to head to Abu Dhabi in January. Sources say production will be "delayed" as director James Wan and studio executives figure out how to re-work the project and "how to proceed in a manner that would be respectful to Walker's death."

The Word

Two familiar faces come out to the social media sphere

PAT HEALY
Metro World News

British Olympic diver Tom Daley and actress Maria Bello took to different forms of media this weekend to reveal new same-sex relationships in two heartfelt confessionals.

Daley took to YouTube to officially come out, telling fans that he has been dating a man for most of this year.

"This has been a hard decision to make, but I wanted you to hear this from me," the 19-year-old athlete says in his video. "In spring this year my life changed massively when I met someone, and they make me feel so happy, so safe, and everything just feel great. That someone is a guy. It did take me by surprise a little bit. It was always in my head that something like that could happen, but it wasn't until spring this year that things just clicked. It felt right and I thought, 'OK,' and my whole world changed there and then."

Meanwhile, Bello came out in a first-person essay in the New York Times' Modern Love titled, Coming Out as a Modern Family. "She was one of the most beautiful, charming, brilliant and funny people I had ever met, but it didn't occur to me, until that soul-searching moment in my garden, that we could perhaps choose to love each other romantically," she wrote about finding her new girlfriend, Clare. Soon, the two "began the long, painful, wonderful process of trying to figure out what our relationship was supposed to be."

Jackson, Bello's 12-year-old son from a previous relationship, took his mother's new relationship in stride. When she told him about Clare, "He looked at me for what seemed like an eternity and then broke into a huge, warm smile. 'Mom, love is love, whatever you are,'" she wrote.

Joe Jonas

Crooner confessional: Jonas brother talks sex, drugs and Disney

Joe Jonas is telling all in an essay for New York Magazine titled Joe Jonas: My life as a Jonas Brother. In the confessional, he opens up about growing up under the Disney spotlight. "I lost my virginity when I was 20," he writes. "I did other stuff before then, but I was sexually active at 20. I'm glad I waited for the right person, because you look back and you go, 'That girl was bats— crazy. I'm glad I didn't go there.'" Jonas also reveals that he smoked marijuana for the first time with Miley Cyrus and ex-girlfriend Demi Lovato. "I must have been 17 or 18," the 24-year-old writes. "They kept saying, 'Try it! Try it!' So I gave it a shot, and it was all right. I don't even smoke weed that often anymore."

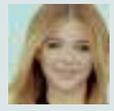
You had me at merengue: Will Renee dance her way onto reality television?

Renee Zellweger may be heading to television — and not in the way you'd expect. The actress is being considered by producers of Dancing with the Stars to head up a season of competitors made up of Oscar winners, according to Radar Online. "The producers are fixated on Renee in part because she hasn't done much dancing at all since Chicago more than 10 years ago, and there's this real mystery about her and what she's up to," a source says. "They keep raising the amount of money they are willing to give her in the hopes that she'll say yes, and the theory is that if they can get her to sign on, then it would attract some other really prominent Oscar-winning stars — who wouldn't normally do reality TV — to fall in step."

Renee Zellweger

Twitter

@ladygaga
Rolled around Tokyo today, made it to my favorite shop. They asked me to paint a leather (an epic pastime of mine)



@ChloeGMoretz
had a weird dream after watching the new hunger games that i picked up archery and was like a championship archer. weird. need to buy a bow.

@jeremypiven
The good news is we are alive and not defined by our favorite sports teams (he said sobbing like a grandmother on the floor)

What cha' know about the not-so-new tea trend matcha?

Good for you. It's been called the Superman of green tea, but what exactly does it do to help you in your day-to-day life?

MAJA
LUNDAGER PEDERSEN
Metro World News

One hundred thirty times — that's how much the super-trendy, super-old Japanese matcha tea is supposed to beat regular green tea with when it comes to antioxidants. But what does that really mean? And is there a purpose for including a teaspoon of the — some would say not exactly tasty — matcha powder?

"I definitely think matcha can help prevent (illnesses) and keep you healthy when it comes to diseases," says Rachel Berman, dietitian and health content manager for About.com.

Matcha is a green tea and research shows that the antioxidants (more precisely, catechins) in it reduce the risk of cancer. Furthermore, green tea contains serotonin, which can help reduce stress and work as a mood enhancer. Last but certainly not least, it can help increase metabolism. But Berman is hesitant to tout it as a cure-all.

"I wouldn't necessarily say, 'Drink green tea and you will lose weight,'" she says. "The amount of calories you may burn won't make up for having a cheeseburger at lunch."

One of the reasons why matcha is making waves more than normal green tea is the way it's brewed.

"Matcha is a powder and it's the entire leaf, versus brewing leaves in water, which won't give you as much of the health benefits," the dietitian tells us.

Matcha contains caffeine, too, and Berman doesn't recommend going over four or five cups a day, or drinking it past 5 p.m.

"Just incorporate it as a substitute for a mid-afternoon soda or coffee," she says.

The conclusion must be that matcha is worth a try, but one question still remains. Why has a tea that's been around since the 12th century become so popular now?

"I think that people are looking for ways to improve their diet any way possible," Berman says. "Certain foods go in and out of trend all the time, so maybe people are looking for a way to get antioxidants since there has been so much research about how good green tea is. Why not have the one that is even more powerful than just regular green tea?"

Making sense of matcha

If you find this wonder tea a tiny bit too expensive, Berman recommends you instead ask for a really high quality of green tea. You will probably get a lot of the same benefits from it, she says.

- **Where is it grown?** Matcha only grows in Japan.
- **Why drink it?** It's known as a mood enhancer because of its amino acid content.
- **Pricey?** The softer matcha is, the more expensive it is.

Add a little matcha to your afternoon delight. ALL PHOTOS ISTOCK IMAGES

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ANIMAL SERVICES

Huevos Rancheros: Brunch in Mexico without leaving home

This recipe serves two. COURTESY PRESIDENT'S CHOICE

Huevos Rancheros is a popular Mexican breakfast or brunch dish consisting of eggs.

Using egg whites instead of whole eggs in traditional egg dishes such as Huevos Rancheros saves you cholesterol, fat and calories. They also cook up fluffier than whole scrambled eggs.

1. In medium nonstick frying pan, melt butter over medium heat; cook onion for 4 to 6 minutes or until softened. In large bowl, whisk egg whites until very frothy; whisk in salt and pepper and add to pan with onions. Cook for 2 to 4 minutes, occasionally lifting eggs and allowing uncooked egg white to flow underneath, or until egg is set on bottom.

2. Meanwhile, in small saucepan cook salsa, tomatoes and beans over medium heat until hot.

3. Sprinkle cheese over eggs and turn egg whites over, scrambling them slightly. Divide cooked egg whites between two dinner plates. Top with salsa mixture. Sprinkle with coriander. Serve with warmed whole wheat tortillas, if desired.

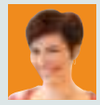
COURTESY PRESIDENT'S CHOICE

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp (15 ml) unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) chopped red onion
- 1 cup (250 ml) PC Blue Menu Egg Whites
- 1/8 tsp (0.5 ml) each salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2/3 cup (150 ml) PC Avocado and Key Lime Salsa
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) quartered cherry tomatoes
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) rinsed and drained canned black beans
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) light cheddar shredded cheese
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) chopped fresh coriander

Health Solutions

Mr. Sunflower, bring me butter



NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Sunflower butter is not made from a nut. It is a seed, which makes it school approved. (Sometimes. You better check!)

Sunflower seeds are mildly anti-inflammatory due to their high mineral and antioxidant content but without sugar, the spread can be a tiny bit more bitter than the more typical peanut butter.

Fear not, here are some ways to enjoy it:

- Spread with honey and banana to provide a balanced snack.
- Dip dried fruit into a tablespoonful.
- Use in place of peanut butter in cookie recipes. You will not notice the difference.
- Add to smoothies to bump up protein and good fats.
- Use in place of tahini for making hummus.

Each time you add a different food, you are adding different nutrients, and your body needs a wide range of every kind.

Go beyond wheat crackers and try quinoa or brown rice crackers to balance out the amino acids. Pairing a nut or seed with a whole grain makes a complete protein. Be brave!

THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND PRIVATE NUTRITIONIST IN TORONTO. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM

Cauliflower-Bell Pepper Quiche cuts down calories

You might be ready to take it easy before the rush of holiday calories. If so, this brunch or dinner dish is for you.

The simple, low-carb, high-flavour "quiche" calls for no grains, no gluten and no heavy lifting.

The whole thing is cooked in a single skillet and requires only a few minutes of hands-on time. The "crust" is made from caramelized cauliflower florets, but actually any number of other vegetables could be substituted. This quiche also can be seasoned however you like. Curry powder would be great, as would smoked paprika and cumin. And if you like it spicy, add some chopped jalapenos to the mix.

1. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Coat the pan with cooking spray, then add the cauliflower florets and bell pepper, arranging them in an even layer. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, without stirring, for 3 minutes.

2. Stir to turn the florets, then let them cook another 3 minutes without moving them. Once the florets are evenly browned, cover the pan and cook another 3 to 4 minutes.

3. In a bowl, mix together the egg whites, thyme and garlic. Pour evenly over the vegetables, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover the pan and cook for 3 minutes.

4. Sprinkle the feta over the quiche, then cover again and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes, or until the eggs are completely cooked. Season with salt and pepper.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 5 cups small cauliflower florets (about 1 head)
- 1 large red bell pepper, cored and chopped
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 8 egg whites (or 1 1/2 cups pasteurized egg whites)
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/3 cup fat-free crumbled feta cheese

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Brunch. Starry Morning Raisin French Toast

1. Whisk eggs, milk, vanilla, cinnamon and salt in a shallow dish.

2. Spread jam over 6 slices of Sun-Maid Raisin Cinnamon Swirl Bread and top remaining slices to make sandwiches.

3. Cut each sandwich into a festive shape with a large cookie cutter. Reserve remaining bread for another use.

4. Dip each shape into the egg mixture on both sides.

5. Cook 3 minutes per side in a buttered non-stick skillet over media low heat or until golden.

6. Dust with icing sugar and serve with warm maple syrup, if desired. COURTESY SUN-MAID

Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 2/3 cup (150 ml) milk
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) vanilla
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) cinnamon
- Pinch salt
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) of your favourite jam
- 12 slices Sun-Maid Raisin Cinnamon Swirl Bread
- Butter, for cooking
- Icing sugar, for dusting
- Maple syrup, for topping

What's growing in your veggie drawer? A big pile of potential monthly savings

Home economics. Get to know the inside of your refrigerator, and you'll find it's easier to use up leftover food

YOUR MONEY
Alison Griffiths
money@metronews.ca

My oldest daughter, Claudia, who just gave birth to grandson number two, has been coping with all the usual challenges — spit ups, endless laundry and sleepless nights. However, as she burps, rocks, changes and does it all again, a happy fact has emerged. She is saving money.

A drop in income during maternity leave usually places tremendous financial pressure on young families. However, my daughter triumphantly reported that her family of four is in better financial shape than ever before. And it's largely because of the refrigerator.

During those sleepless pat pat, jig jig, feed, change and rock-for-hours nights, she started organizing the fridge. There she discovered a cornucopia of meals. Veggies, fruit, leftovers and bits of this and that stored in the fridge or freezer started her thinking about using it all up before the green fuzzies or freezer burn attacked.

What started out as something to kill time when she couldn't sleep turned into a habit of fridge and freezer cruising. Once she got the hang of coming up with meals based on items she had on hand, the habit quickly became ingrained. As a result, she finds it far easier to put together dinner, no matter how tired she is, and she's discovered all kinds of new ways to use a cup of rice or a few slices of ham. In fact, in the nearly two months since baby George arrived they haven't resorted to takeout once. Even better, neither she nor her husband feels deprived. Far from it. They feel empowered, as in, "I am in control of my fridge!"

Perhaps best of all, waste has been reduced to almost nothing, which in turn has taken a nice bite out of the grocery expenditures. Claudia figures she is saving around $200 a month. An Internet search turns up hundreds of excellent leftover ideas. One of the best resources is bigoven.com/recipes/leftover. Choose up to three ingredients or flavours and a host of recipes appear. I picked bell pepper, brown rice and black beans, which resulted in some terrific ideas to use up three items in my fridge.

Most of us have a group of ingredients that regularly end up as leftovers, eventually to be thrown out. With an arsenal of recipes that use those ingredients, it will become fairly easy to whip up an eco-friendly, money-saving meal. Eat and save money! Thanks Claudia.

Looking for leftovers

What started out as something to kill time when she couldn't sleep turned into a habit of fridge and freezer cruising.

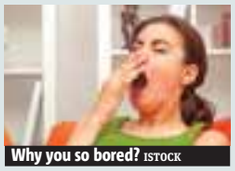
When you spend time going through your refrigerator and freezer, you're more likely to actually use up the food you've bought before it goes bad. ISTOCK

Different types

OMG: The truth about boredom

When dozing off in a classroom or office, you may think it's your fault but you would be wrong. There are clear categories of boredom triggered by your environment, says German pioneering researcher Dr. Thomas Goetz.

Indifferent boredom: A relaxing, possibly positive type – "a general indifference to, and withdrawal from, the external world"
Calibrating boredom: Wandering thoughts – "general openness to changing the situation"
Apathetic boredom: Impossible to break from this mode – "dangerous, similar to depression"
KIERON MONKS/METRO



Why you so bored? ISTOCK

Managing meltdowns: Tips on tackling your kids' Xmas tantrums

Match expectations. If you mean business with them at home, don't change a thing when you all go to the mall together

With the arrival of the holiday season comes the inevitable spike in shopping excursions and social gatherings — and with them, potential opportunities for children to act out.

Navigating through crowded aisles and packed parking lots can be stressful enough. But contending with a youngster having a meltdown in the mall is enough to fray the nerves of even the most mild-mannered parent.

"Tantrums are about power struggles and attention," said Natalia McPhedran, an Ottawa-based children's coach and author of Life With Kids — Empowering Our Children To Be Ready For The Real World, due out in December. "If we use techniques at home that avoid the power struggles, I think that you're halfway there by the time you get to the mall because they know: 'OK, Mom means business.'"

McPhedran — a mother of two — outlines expectations prior to a shopping trip. That includes specifying the purpose of the visit to ensure youngsters don't get sidetracked.

"For example: 'Today, we're just going to get this and this and this. Don't even ask me for chocolates, don't ask me for candy, don't ask me for toys. You can look, but you can't touch, because today we're not buying that,'" said McPhedran. "If you're consistent with following through with other things at home, they know that you mean business when you say something.

"You've already given them that pre-set expectation at home. When they get to the mall, they know that you're also going to follow through there." Once kids know the expectations, McPhedran said it's still good to have rules making kids aware of what they can do.

Even if they freak out, you should remain calm at all times. ISTOCK

"Once you get there, let's say: 'Let's go in the toy aisle and let's go and look at all the cool stuff they have. Tell me what you like and we'll see what Santa can do,'" she said. "I remember we used to walk through the toy section of Zellers when I was little and we never walked out with stuff every time we went."

In the event a tearful tantrum still ensues, McPhedran said the source of unhappiness is usually due to one of three things: hunger, fatigue or a desire to be heard. Rather than reacting in anger to the outburst, she suggested an alternative approach.

"You have to keep your calm as well. Because if you freak out also, then that just gives them even more attention and more people look," said McPhedran, mother to an 11-year-old daughter and nine-year-old son. "Come down to their level, calmly say: 'We are not having this right now.'"

McPhedran said adults should recognize their child's feelings, such as those of anger at parents for not purchasing a particular item. But they should then remind kids of initial pre-warning that buying goods for them wasn't a part of the day's agenda.

Similarly, when it comes to attending a party or family gathering, establishing and articulating ground rules beforehand is pivotal.

"If they know what to expect and they know what you expect of them, then the behaviour should just follow," said McPhedran.

"Before I leave the house, I would say: 'Listen, make your aunts and uncles proud. Show them that you know how to behave when you go to (an event) like this. And make yourself proud and feel good about yourself.' THE CANADIAN PRESS

Curling. Martin starts 2-0 at Olympic trials in the 'Peg

Jeff Stoughton made a great shot to tie their game but it wasn't enough as Kevin Martin extended his winning streak at the Olympic Curling Trials to two games and put Stoughton in a must-win situation from now on in Winnipeg.

"Wasn't that something ... you're just never safe," Martin said of Stoughton's shot, minutes after the Edmonton skip's single in the 10th made it 6-5.

"We had to make it a tough double and of course he made an incredible double and made it a close game."

Kevin Martin
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Brad Jacobs and John Morris also stayed undefeated. Morris, Martin's former third, is curling with B.C.'s Jim Cotter and he beat Calgary's Kevin Koe 6-4 and Jacobs, out of Sault Ste Marie, Ont., downed Winnipeg's Mike McEwan 7-5.

Glenn Howard, out of Coldwater, Ont., beat skip John Epping of Toronto 9-5, which left both at 1-1. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL. Jokinen leads Jets past Rangers in 3rd period

Olli Jokinen broke a tie with 7:18 left in the third period and then netted an insurance goal moments later to lift the Winnipeg Jets to a 5-2 victory over the New York Rangers and rookie goalie Cam Talbot on Monday night.

Jokinen, a former Rangers player who also assisted on Devin Setoguchi's tying goal in the second period, gathered the puck after a strange carom off the end boards. He then fired a shot past Talbot, who got a surprise second straight start over No. 1 goalie Henrik Lundqvist, to make it 3-2.

Jokinen then squeezed his sixth of the season between Talbot's pads with 1:54 left. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On Monday

Jets	Rangers
5	2

Latest Canadian junior squad skews younger

World juniors. It won't just be 19-year-olds playing key roles come Boxing Day in Sweden

Canada's wait

4

Canada hasn't won gold in four years and promised to do things differently this year. That meant more scouting and a smaller selection camp — just 25 players instead of the usual 30.

It's a tournament meant for 19-year-olds, but Team Canada's entry into the world junior tournament might have to rely heavily on 18-year-olds as well as a couple of exceptional youngsters.

Centre Connor McDavid of the Erie Otters is looking to become the first 16-year-old since Sidney Crosby to crack to the lineup, while defenceman Aaron Ekblad of the Barrie Colts hopes to make the team at 17. Both entered the OHL as 15-year-olds under the league's "exceptional player" status.

"They are exceptional players" said Team Canada coach Brent Sutter. "They were standout players at age 15 and to stand out a year or two later shouldn't be something that shocks because of their talent as highly touted as they were."

McDavid was described as the next Sidney Crosby — by Crosby himself — during the lockout last year. The Newmarket, Ont., native is sixth on OHL scoring with 11 goals and 34 assists for 45 points in 27 games.

Canada has invited 14 19-year-olds and nine 18-year-olds, along with Ekblad (17) and McDavid (16) to the camp running from Dec. 12-15 in Toronto.

There are no guarantees McDavid or Ekblad will make the final roster when the roster is cut from 25 to 22 players before the team heads to Malmo, Sweden for the tournament starting Boxing Day. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Newmarket, Ont., native Connor McDavid of the Erie Otters was one of 25 players named to Hockey Canada's world junior selection camp on Monday.
ANDREW FRANCIS WALLACE/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MLB

Catcher Navarro joining Blue Jays

Catcher Dioner Navarro signed a two-year contract with the Toronto Blue Jays on Monday.

He will earn $3 million US in 2014 and $5 million in 2015.

The 29-year-old hit .300 with a career-high 13 home runs in 89 games for the Chicago Cubs last season. He also had 34 RBIs.

Dioner Navarro
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Navarro, who has struggled with injuries throughout his career, has a .251 average, 54 home runs and 243 RBIs in 10 MLB seasons. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CFL

Slotback Bowman re-ups with Esks

The Edmonton Eskimos have signed import slotback Adarius Bowman to a two-year contract extension. Bowman was activated off the injured list in Week 11 and recorded 44 catches for 697 yards and five touchdowns. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Semyon Varlamov

Avs goalie remains free on bond

Colorado goalie Semyon Varlamov can remain free on bond while facing a domestic violence charge involving his girlfriend, a judge said Monday. The judge advised him to face a misdemeanour charge of third-degree assault. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in pictures

1

2

3

1 NBA. Pierce on the shelf

Brooklyn Nets forward Paul Pierce will be out two to four weeks with a broken bone in his right hand. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2 Hockey. U.S. HOFers inducted

The Stanley Cup champion, three-time Olympian and four-time NHL all-star Doug Weight was inducted Monday into the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame in Detroit. Former NHLer Bill Guerin, Hurricanes owner Peter Karmanos, former college coach Ron Mason and women's hockey pioneer Cindy Curley were also inducted. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 NHL. Lupul back on skates

Joffrey Lupul, out with a strained groin, skated by himself prior to the Leafs' regular skate on Monday morning. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
As the new moon falls in one of the more adventurous areas of your chart, you will take the kind of risk you might usually steer clear of. No doubt it will surprise a few people when it pays off handsomely.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
In all things there is a natural ebb and flow. If you are on the down side of the curve at the moment, you are sure to be on the up again by week's end.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Optimism is generally a good thing but too much can be dangerous. The planets warn you must make an effort to see things as they are today, not as how you dream they might be. That applies especially to partnership matters.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
If you change your mind about something today, you will most likely have to change it back again later in the week. Stick with the decision you recently made and see it through to the end. What happened to that resolute Cancer nature?

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Yours is one of the most favoured signs at the moment and today's new moon in your fellow Fire sign of Sagittarius urges you to cash in on your creative ideas.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
There are times when you let the mask of self-control slip and let your emotions get the better of you and that will most likely happen today. If it does, it may be to your benefit.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Your energy may be high at the moment but don't burn yourself out. Social invitations will come over the next few days but you are under no obligation to says yes to any.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
The more you are told you can't have something, the more you will make a point of getting it. That could be fun but could also lead to situations that do you no favours. Don't let your desires get out of hand.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
As the new moon takes place in your birth sign, it is essential that you choose one aim and stick with it. This can be one of the most successful times of the year but don't scatter your energies in a dozen directions.

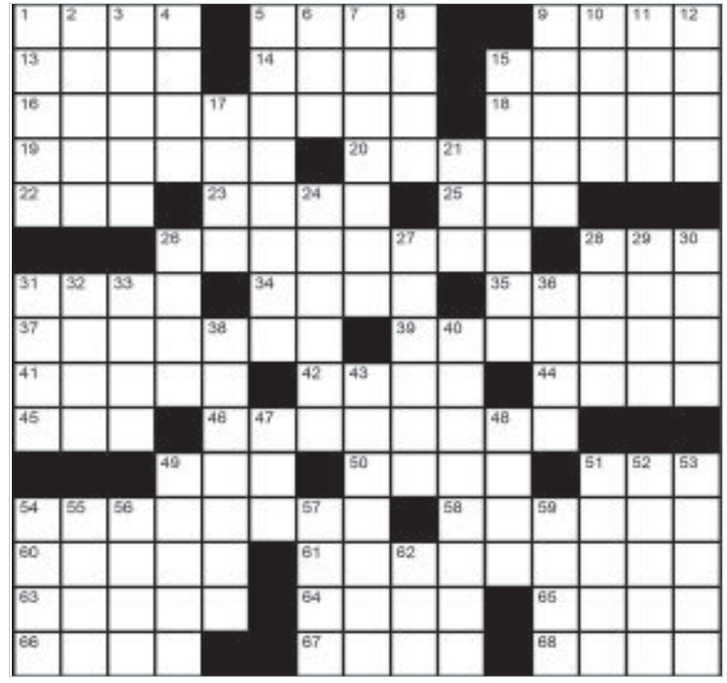
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
There is no point trying to hide your feelings because others can see how you are hurting. What they don't understand though is why you are hurting. If you need help, you really must be honest with them.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
The planets warn you need to watch what you say over the next 24 hours. Not everyone appreciates your directness and honesty, especially when it hurts them personally.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may be dreading upheavals on the work front but the planets suggest you have little to worry about. There will be some adjustments to make, but over time you will benefit. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

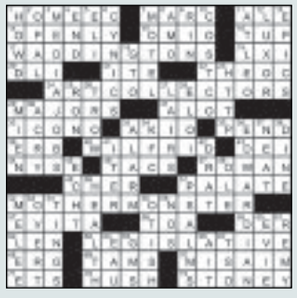
See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Punt
5. '90s Halifax band
9. Britney Spears' new album: 'Britney __'
13. __ even keel: 2 wds.
14. Stratford-__-Avon
15. Ms. Berry
16. Potter's penner
18. "Golly!"
19. Anna Karenina's love in Leo Tolstoy's classic book
20. Shoppers __ __
22. Tonality
23. __ Admiral
25. Gambler's cube
26. "Hmm...": 3 wds.
28. Fred __ (Lyricist of Broadway musical Cabaret)
31. Swedish store
34. John who co-hosted "Entertainment Tonight"
35. "Like that'll happen!"
37. Fraser = _ _ __
39. Actress Ferrera
41. CTV journalist Ms. Ien
42. "__ _ help you?" (Store's query)
44. Kinds
45. Fathers of Jr.s
46. College in Ontario; or, actress Nicollette
49. Three non-consonants
50. Singer/songwriter Aimee
51. Grand __ (Wine designation)
54. Egypt: Kingly discovery back in '22: 2 wds.
58. Scratcher's reasons
60. Popeye's enemy
61. Traditional dwelling of the Iroquois
63. Tree type
64. Nine __ Nails
65. Mix
66. Mailing enclosures, e.g.
67. Green, in Gaspe
68. Xs

Down
1. '70s detective series
2. Linen tape for trimmings
3. Comedian Drew
4. Fort __, Kentucky
5. 'Our Pet': St. Vital, MB-born singer, Member of the Order of Canada as well as Canada's Walk of Fame
6. Prefix to 'culture' (Beekeeping)
7. England's capital, in France
8. Civil or Electrical, e.g.
9. Actress Ms. Pressly
10. __ Ostrovsky ("Hot in Cleveland" character)
11. Yankee or Oriole, e.g.
12. Tree dwelling
15. Cleanliness
17. Was alternative
21. 'Quiet' add-on
24. Punish with an arbitrary fine
26. Secular
27. Ms. Twain
28. Santana song: "__ Ways"
29. British guitarist Jeff
30. Cape Breton inland sea, __ d'Or Lake
31. Some PCs
32. Vehicle in "If I Had $1,000,000"
33. Makes mistakes
36. Ireland, in verse
38. Guest
40. One Direction's latest album: '__ Memories'
43. Ulna: 2 wds.
47. Boo-__
48. Literary collection [abbr.]
49. "Melrose Place" star Rob
51. Plane-jumper's need
52. Amber, for example
53. Device operators, for example
54. Time as yet unknown acronym [pl.]
55. Role in "The Producers" (2005)
56. Sassiness, in slang
57. 1054 in ancient Rome
59. Price
62. ATM maker

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

7		1		5		2	9	
	5	9						
			1					8
4		2	5					
8			6		4			5
					8	3		9
5					3			
						5	1	
	3	8		1		9		6

Yesterday's Sudoku

2	4	6	3	5	8	7	1	9
7	1	3	2	9	4	6	5	8
5	8	9	7	6	1	2	4	3
3	5	1	4	2	6	8	9	7
9	7	4	1	8	3	5	2	6
8	6	2	5	7	9	1	3	4
1	9	5	6	3	7	4	8	2
6	2	8	9	4	5	3	7	1
4	3	7	8	1	2	9	6	5

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